

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 3062

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SCUL, UR

SUBJ: REPORTED POLITBURO DISPUTE OVER EXTENDING VALIDITY OF
ROSTROPOVICH'S PASSPORT

1. A SOVIET SOURCE WITH GOOD CONTACTS IN BOTH THE CULTURAL AND POLITICAL WORLD TOLD US OF A RECENT, HIGH-LEVEL ACRIMONIOUS DEBATE WHICH PRECEDED THE EXTENSION OF THE PASSPORT PERMITTING SOVIET CELLIST MSTISLAV ROSTROPOVICH TO LIVE ABROAD. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, A LENGTHY POLITBURO-LEVEL DEBATE OCCURRED CONCERNING THE QUESTION OF WHETHER TO EXTEND THE PASSPORT AT ALL, AND IF SO, FOR HOW LONG. SUSLOV AND DEMICHEV BOTH CAME DOWN VERY HARD AGAINST ANY EXTENSION OF ROSTROPOVICH'S PASSPORT AND REPORTEDLY TOOK THE LINE THAT SINCE THE CELLIST WAS NEVER GOING TO COME BACK, NOW WAS THE TIME TO TAKE AWAY HIS SOVIET CITIZENSHIP IN ORDER TO DISCOURAGE OTHER IMPORTANT CULTURAL FIGURES FROM THINKING THAT THEY TOO COULD BENEFIT FROM SUCH CONCESSIONS.

2. THE OPPOSITION WAS LED, SURPRISINGLY ENOUGH, BY ANDROPOV. HE ARGUED STRONGLY THAT THE IMMEDIATE PRE-CONGRESS PERIOD WAS NOT A GOOD TIME TO TAKE AWAY THE PASSPORT OF AN INTERNATIONAL FIGURE. IN ADDITION, HE SAID, THE POSSIBILITY THAT ROSTROPOVICH MIGHT EVENTUALLY RETURN TO THE USSR SHOULD NOT BE FORECLOSED BY ANY GOVERNMENT ACT. IN RESPONSE TO THE CONTINUED STRONG OPPOSITION
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OF SUSLOV, ANDROPOV IS REPORTED FINALLY TO HAVE SAID THAT

THIS WAS "A POLICE MATTER, NOT AN IDEOLOGICAL ONE. YOU MAY BE THE GUARDINAS OF IDEOLOGICAL PURITY BUT I REPRESENT THE POLICE." IT WAS FINALLY DECIDED TO RENEW THE PASSPORT FOR ONE YEAR.

3. COMMENT: WE FIND THIS STORY BARELY PLAUSIBLE, AND PASS IT ON FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH. SUSLOV, OF COURSE, IS WELL KNOW FOR HIS IDEOLOGICAL DOGMATISM AND CULTURAL RIGIDITY. MOREOVER, ANDROPOV IS SAID TO BE A CULTURED INTELLECTURAL WHO IS PERSONALLY LIBERAL. INTERESTED IN ART AND MUSIC, HE REPORTEDLY HAS AN EXCELLENT PRIVATE COLLECTION OF SOVIET ART WORKS THAT COULD NEVER BE DISPLAYED IN ANY MUSEUM IN THE USSR.
STOESSEL

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